

Local nationals bid for Bagram jobs



Photo by Pfc. Christina Carde

A local worker takes a moment to smile for the camera as he shovels his daily load of rocks onto the contract site.

Pfc. Christina Carde
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Many improvements have been made on Bagram Air Base since the arrival of the U.S. troops.

A lot of the credit is due to the thousands of local contractors who come to Bagram's gates daily looking for work. These local nationals wait for the day they can prove their skill in at least one of the many projects on Bagram.

"There are three types of contracts available to the local nationals," said Lt. Col. Patrick O Farrell, director of contracting for Afghanistan, Bagram Joint Contracting Center. "The

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CJ-9 civilian's ties lead to village adoption

By Master Sgt. Kelly Tyler
CJTF-180 Public Affairs Office

CHARCHI, Afghanistan — Farid (Fred) Rahmani stands in the center of a long-abandoned Qala (country house) in the village of Charchi, some 10 kilometers south of Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.

Until 1978 the house that now stands in ruin belonged to Rahmani's family. Remnants of the once grand home stand as a sad reminder of years of war and drought. Rahmani shows visitors the ornately decorated main entrance that once protected his family from unwanted guests. The intricate patterns in the mud brick walls still tell a tale of a prosperous family. Nothing, however, could protect the house from the invasion of the Russians in 1979 and the subsequent maraud-

ing of the village by the Taliban.

"There, we made raisins. Guests stayed in this area, to keep them away from the women," Rahmani said, with a broad sweeping gesture taking in the west side of the now-crumbling mud walls.

Rahmani, who left Afghanistan 25 years ago when he was 15, still has strong ties to the village of Charchi. He owns 1,500 acres around the village of 1,200 people. The gardeners who worked for his grandfather, and later his father, remain in the village, despite the fact there has been no garden, no crop grown there, for more than a quarter of a century.

His strong attachment to the village led his staff section, the Coalition Joint Task



Photo by Master Sgt. Kelly Tyler, CJTF-180 PAO

Farid (Fred) Rahmani owns 1,500 acres of land around the village of Charchi. His ties to the village led the CJ-9 staff section to adopt Charchi.

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Doug Brazy of the NTSB, brings out the cockpit voice recorder from US Airways Flight 5481 for the media.

Airline must check 43 planes

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — As the investigation continues into the deadly crash of an Air Midwest commuter flight, the Federal Aviation Administration late Thursday ordered the airline to take “immediate action” to check flight control systems on 43 planes serviced at the same maintenance facility as the doomed plane.

FAA spokesman Greg Martin would not elaborate on what that “immediate action” might entail, including whether the airline would ground the planes.

A source also said the FAA received an anonymous tip after Wednesday’s crash that one of the workers who loaded Air Midwest Flight 5481, operating under the US Airways Express banner, thought it was too heavy — but was overruled by a supervisor who cleared it for flight.

Information from the flight data recorder recovered from the crash site has led investigators to focus on records of work performed on the plane’s elevators, which control the up and down movement of the aircraft.

U.N.: Iraq imported missile engines

UNITED NATIONS — Iraq violated U.N. sanctions by importing missile engines as recently as 2002 and delivered an “inadequate” list of scientists and technicians involved in its weapons programs, chief U.N.

weapons inspector Hans Blix told the U.N. Security Council Thursday.

In addition, nuclear inspectors have been unable to interview key personnel without an Iraqi government observer present, Mohamed ElBaradei, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said.

The United States and Britain called on inspectors to intensify their searches after Thursday’s briefing of the Security Council, and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, John Negroponte, urged inspectors to question Iraqi scientists outside the country.

Inspectors have yet to find any “smoking gun” demonstrating that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction prohibited by U.N. resolutions ending the 1991 Persian Gulf war, said Blix, the head of the U.N. Monitoring, Inspections and Verification Commission. But that “is no guarantee that prohibited stocks or activities could not exist at other sites,” Blix told Security Council members, according to notes released after the briefing.

N. Korea pulls out of treaty

SEOUL — North Korea has announced its withdrawal from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, according to the official North Korean news agency monitored in Seoul.

But the secretive communist state said it has no intention of developing nuclear weapons, despite the pullout.

“The government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in a statement today declared its withdrawal from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its total freedom from the binding force of the safeguards accord with the International Atomic Energy Agency,” the official KCNA news agency said.

The withdrawal — which is to come into immediate effect — comes as two North Korean diplomats begin talks with New Mexico’s state governor in what some had hoped was a sign the tension is easing over Pyongyang’s nuclear buildup.

Woman in abuse case hospitalized

NEWARK — The woman taken into custody early Thursday in connection with the starvation of two children and the death of another was hospitalized later in the day,

forcing the postponement of her scheduled arraignment, officials said.

Sherry Murphy, 41, was arrested at 1:45 a.m. in Newark, after a days-long nationwide manhunt by police and the FBI. Authorities were told of her whereabouts by a Haitian immigrant who had sheltered her since the weekend. He recognized her from news reports about the case.

Newark Mayor Sharpe James identified the tipster as Jean Claude Dessources who contacted police when he decided the picture he saw on television was Murphy.

Dessources told police he came forward because he was concerned about the abused children and because he was interested in the \$5,000 reward, posted Monday by James.

Couple jailed for bomb hoax

WASHINGTON — A Maine couple’s attempt to make a political statement by rigging up a fake bomb in their checked luggage led to their arrest, officials said Thursday.

Paul Kenneth Donahue, 50, and Teresa Marie Wood, 46, had been scheduled to fly from San Jose, California, to Atlanta, Georgia, on Delta Flight 576 Tuesday. When their bags were put through a bomb detection machine, federal screeners found what turned out to be a snow boot with batteries, wires and an electrical power strip arranged in a suspicious way.

Screeners also found a note that read, “To the uniformed puppet opening this bag — congratulations. You’ve just brought this once free nation one step closer to becoming a fascist police state,” according to Transportation Security Administration spokesman Robert Johnson. The note was scribbled on one side of the cardboard torn from a box of Cracklin’ Oat Bran.

San Jose police arrested the pair, who are from Machias, Maine, and booked them for “sending or placing a false or facsimile bomb,” Johnson added.

An airline source told CNN that Donahue said he is the editor of his local newspaper.

Iraq declaration 'deliberate effort to deceive'

By Kathleen T. Rhem
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — After reviewing Iraq's declaration to the U.N. Security Council for a month, U.S. officials feel the document is "a deliberate attempt to deceive by material omissions."

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Negroponte told reporters at U.N. headquarters today in New York that the Iraqi declaration of Dec. 7 constitutes "a further material breach" of Security Council Resolution 1441.

Resolution 1441, passed by unanimous vote Nov. 8, 2002, was intended to be Iraq's last chance to disarm peacefully. U.S. and international leaders have repeatedly urged Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein to disarm to prevent military action against his regime.

Iraq declared in the 12,000-page document that it has no such weapons. American officials maintain this is false. Negroponte said today that the report fails to answer "numerous outstanding questions."

Previous U.N. inspectors left Iraq in 1998 after years of noncompliance with various Security Council resolutions on Iraq's part. At the time they reported Iraq had enough supplies and equipment to produce 26,000 liters of anthrax and more than 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin, another biological agent that can be fatal within days of exposure.

The inspectors still have questions about several other items Iraq is believed to have had, including the chemical agent VX, missile engines and materials for making solid rocket fuel.

"The declaration, regrettably, has not helped very much to clarify any question marks of the past," Chief U.N. Weapons Inspector Hans Blix said in New York today.

He and Mohamed ElBaradei, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency were there to brief the Security Council on their progress. They said they expect to brief again Jan. 27.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

2000 hrs. at the MWR Building: "Charlie's Angels." Based on the popular 70's TV show, three cute chicks work for the mysterious "Charlie". They are the female 'James Bonds' of our time. They get to blow stuff up, kick the cr*p out of people, and wear really tight clothing, all while trying to retrieve stolen software and balance in high heels. Tomorrow's movie will be "Oh Brother, Where Art Thou."



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER REPORT:

	Today	Saturday
Bagram:	Haze H: 54F L: 26F	Haze H: 48F L: 21F
Kandahar:	Clear H: 63F L: 34F	Clear H: 63F L: 32F
Kabul:	Haze H: 50F L: 27F	Dust H: 46F L: 23F
Uzbekistan:	Partly cloudy/Fog H: 62F L: 39F	Mostly cloudy H: 49F L: 32F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

Freedom Watch falls under the supervision of the Combined Joint Task Force - 180.

CJTF-180 Commander —
Lt. Gen. Dan McNeill
CJTF-180 Command Sergeant Major —
Command Sgt. Maj. Steven R. England
Public Affairs Officer —
Col. Roger King
Public Affairs Sergeant Major —
Master Sgt. Kelly Tyler
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Commander — Maj. William Mott
NCOIC — Staff Sgt. Christina Bhatti
Editor — Sgt. W. Cullen James
Journalists — Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw, Pfc. Christina Carde

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projects range from construction, services such as laundry and water, and supplies.”

However, being assigned to one of these projects is easier said than done. There is a process each contractor must go through to ensure they are not only qualified but trustworthy.

“In the past three months, about 5,000 local nationals have come to bid on contracts,” said U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Umoja Furaha, contingency officer, BJCC. “Of the 5,000 about 500 were actually hired for projects.”

The process of deciding who gets a contract and who has to wait is based on the best bid and the best rapport.

“We have a bid board which lists what projects we have available and a suggested price,” said O Farrell. “The contractors will then make a bid on the project and we make a decision based on that.”

“There can be between three to 10 contractors who bid on the same project at once,” said Furaha. “In these situations it’s not just the lowest bid that gets them the contract, but who we have a good business relationship with. If they have worked well for us in the past, they have a better chance of getting the contract.”

In addition to good bids and rapport, security is also an issue. Before contractors can begin work on Bagram they must first prove they are who they say.



Photos Pfc. Christina Carde

A local worker shovels the last bit of rock out of his truck and onto the dump site. This is one of the many jobs available to locals on Bagram.

“Every contractor is screened in a preliminary interview with counter intelligence,” said Maj. Mike Dombrowski, contingency contracting officer, BJCC. “They must also have an identification card and a thorough background check must be conducted by S2. This is to ensure they don’t have a history that would disqualify them from the contract.”

Once a contractor has been selected and screened they begin work. The BJCC contracting officers said they are constantly amazed at the diligence and abilities of the

locals in completing a project and providing their own resource materials.

“I have seen contractors make a project from nothing,” said Furaha. “They come to us with whatever bare resources they have and work the best they can to complete the job.”

“When I first came to this country, there didn’t appear to be any valuable resources available for these people to live let alone complete a project,” said Dombrowski. “However, I realized when given the opportunity to make money, these people will go to Kabul, Pakistan or anywhere else to get the materials they need and get the job done.”

Even though the U.S. military has their own contractors, the contracting officers at BJCC said hiring locals is better for business. Not only is the U.S. saving money, but they are giving the people of Afghanistan a chance to rebuild their economy.

“These people have been the victims of 23 years of war, poverty and turmoil,” said Furaha. They deserve a chance to rebuild their communities and turn their sorrow into success, he added.

“The people of Afghanistan have known nothing but violence for a very long time,” said Dombrowski. “If we give them the opportunity to work and succeed we will eventually turn soldiers and warlords into businessmen.”



A local national fills a truck with rocks to be transported to a construction site.

CHARCHI, from Page 1 —

Force-180, CJ-9, Civil Military Operations, to officially “adopt” Charchi. Although Rahmani will complete his six-month stint here as an interpreter later this week, his ties with the village will remain, thanks to his CJTF-180 co-workers.

“It’s a way that we as individual soldiers within the section can make a difference in the country,” said Capt. William Meredith, who went with a handful of other soldiers on the initial visit to Charchi Tuesday.

“Fred is more than just our interpreter, he has become our friend, our confidant and mentor in the customs and cultures of this country,” Meredith added.

“The adoption is important because it is good for the U.S. image in the area,” Rahmani said. “The people are not educated, and had very bad experiences with the Russians and the al-Qaida and Taliban. If we go there and explain why we are there, they will like Americans.”

Growing up, Rahmani, visited the village and his grandfather’s Qala on weekends and school breaks. “The economy was good in the village. Business people had houses there. We had gardens,” Rahmani said about the village of his youth. “They had a school, and a small grocery store.”

Now, the majority of the children in the village wear no shoes, even in freezing weather. They have no school and could not afford



Photo by Master Sgt. Kelly Tyler, CJTF-180 PAO

A young Afghan boy stares at soldiers from CJTF-180's CJ9 section who are adopting his village.

to pay the teachers even if they had a school.

The biggest need, according to Rahmani, is for blankets and warm clothing for winter. But that is not the only need. “They need a school for their children. They need school supplies. They need medical attention. They need a well for agriculture so they can work the land again, and grow things.”

Rahmani said the villagers

were very happy to see the Americans come to the village. “They are very happy about the U.S. Army help,” he said. “They said they hope the Army doesn’t leave them alone, and that they are supportive of the U.S. Army in the area. They are happy that the U.S. gave them freedom from the Taliban and al-Qaida, and happy that there are no more warlords who control them and steal their goods

and abuse them,” he added. “They feel very safe right now after 25 years.”

The visit left the U.S. soldiers feeling a variety of emotions.

“My first assessment was how resilient this people seem... how after (the) years of war and deprivation they have suffered, they still have smiles on their faces,” Meredith said after the section’s preliminary visit. “It is my humble opinion that it will take a generation to erase some of the scars caused by years of fighting here. We can’t make great strides. Progress is made here a quarter-of-an-inch at a time. It is one child that you give a little bit of hope too.”

Meredith and his crew distributed Humanitarian Daily Rations (a civilian form of the military’s Meals, Ready to Eat), along with winter clothing and tools donated by people from the United States. They hope to provide blankets and school supplies in subsequent monthly visits to the village.

Meredith’s wife, Janice, a teacher’s aide in western Kentucky, is trying to coordinate packets to send to the Afghan children in late February when the schools in Afghanistan open again. Charchi currently has no school, but the children all ask the assembled soldiers for pens and paper.

The few hours spent in the village left Meredith feeling like he was making a contribution in Afghanistan.

“For the first time, I felt like I was doing what I came over here to do,” Meredith said.

Got News?

If so, contact the Freedom Watch at
318-231-4239 or by email at
william.james@us.army.mil





Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *ESPN.com*)

Els, Garcia, Furyk may start '03 with a win

KAPALUA, Hawaii — Even though Tiger Woods (knee injury) and Phil Mickelson (vacation) are missing from this week's season-opening Mercedes Championships, I expect a competitive tournament from the rest of the 2002 winners.



Ernie Els has had success at Kapalua in the past, and is one of the favorites to win this week.

Any time you subtract the top two players in the world, it obviously changes things. With them out of the picture, there are three players in Kapalua this week that in my mind are head and shoulders above the rest.

The first is Sergio Garcia, who was the first to punch his ticket for this tournament of champions by winning last year's Mercedes in a playoff. He'll turn just 23 years old on Thursday, and I expect big things from him in 2003.

The next is Ernie Els, coming off an exceptional

year that saw him win five events worldwide and capture his third major at the British Open. He has traditionally played the Plantation Course very well, finishing runner-up to Woods at the 2000 Mercedes and placing third in 2001.

The third is a golfer most people overlook: Jim Furyk. He has finished in the top 10 here the last four years. He likes Kapalua so much he bought a home on the course.

Throw Charles Howell III — a hard-working guy who peaked at the end of 2002 and is determined to be the best in the game — into that group and you'll have quite a competition, even without Tiger.

Gosch, 74, sinks consecutive aces

RANCHO MIRAGE, Calif. — By his own admission, Jack Gosch's front nine at the Sunrise Country Club earlier this week was nothing special.

That all changed in a hurry.

He aced the 10th hole. And then on the 11th — bingo! — another hole in one.

"I've never gotten more congratulations for anything in my life," the 74-year-old Gosch said Thursday, three days after his amazing

feat. "The word spreads fast in the golf community."

After what he called his worst front nine at Sunrise since October, Gosch used a driver to ace the 204-yard, par-3 10th hole. He followed that up by hitting an 8-iron into the hole on the 135-yard, par-3 11th.

And there was no disputing that it really happened, either. Playing in his foursome was Jerry Seeman, the senior director of officiating in the NFL for 10½ years until his retirement in June 2001.

"It was incredible," Seeman said. "The beauty of it all is they were just very good golf shots — nothing fluky. I've never had a hole in one myself, I think I've seen three other ones. This was absolutely phenomenal."

Sunrise is an executive course, with 10 par 4s and eight par 3s — a 3,837-yard, par-64 layout.

Gosch has an 11 handicap at Sunrise and a 17 handicap otherwise. The retired auto dealership owner shot a 90 at the par-72 Thunderbird Country Club on Thursday — a fairly typical day on the links for him.

"I get a 7, then I get a par," he said with a laugh.

Hugo, countrymen grab early advantage

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — Jean Hugo made the first move in reclaiming his European Tour card, posting a 66 to take a one-stroke lead Thursday in the South African Open.

The South African player did not have a bogey in his round of 6-under.

Defending champion Tim Clark was one shot back at 67. There was a large group at 4-under: James Kingston and Tjaart van der Walt of South America, Andrew Coltart and David Drysdale from Scotland, Peter Lawrie and Iain Pyman from England and Rolf Muntz of the Netherlands.

Woods rehabbing knee

Tiger Woods is continuing to rehab his knee after arthroscopic surgery Dec. 12, but isn't ready to say whether he'll be ready to play in the Buick Invitational in mid-February, where he is expected by many to make his 2003 debut.

"I can't really judge whether I will be ready to go by then," Woods said on his Web site, tigerwoods.com.

He practiced putting at his home course in Florida last Friday, but still hasn't swung a club since the procedure.

"I don't want to play in pain again," he said. "However long the doctor says to wait, that's what I'm going to do. Once he gives me

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the OK to practice, that's it."

One thing for sure is that he'll be out for the season-opening Mercedes Championships this week, marking the first time he's missed a tournament due to injury.

"It's definitely getting better," Woods said. "At least I'm able to get out and do stuff. I'm doing a lot of cardio rehab on an exercise bike. I should be ready for the Tour de France by mid-July."

Rafter says motivation wasn't there to play

SYDNEY, Australia—Pat Rafter, formerly the world's top-ranked player in men's tennis, announced his retirement Friday at age 30, ending 12 months of indecision during an extended break from the sport.

Rafter, a two-time U.S. Open champion and a two-time finalist at Wimbledon, made his announcement in an open letter to the Australian media. The release coincided with the draw for the Australian Open.

"I know it's been a while coming, but I am announcing my official retirement from professional tennis," Rafter wrote in the letter.

"As you can probably understand, it has been a very difficult decision for me to make, which is why it took me some time to be sure I was making the right decision."

Rafter said he didn't have the motivation to compete on tour after taking several months off in late 2001 to recover from arm injuries.

"If I couldn't commit to giving 100 percent to the game, then there would be no point in returning. By the end of 2002, the motivation just wasn't there and my decision was made."



After taking a year to decide, Patrick Rafter officially quits.

Hewitt faces pressure Down Under

It's a good thing for Australia's Lleyton Hewitt that he thrives under pressure.

The last Aussie to win the country's Grand Slam tournament was Mark Edmondson in 1976. For tennis-crazed Australia, the 26-year drought has been unbearable.

Enter Hewitt, ranked No. 1 in the world. A year ago, he was also top ranked, but chicken pox ruined his chances. So this is the first time that his compatriots have realistic hopes of him taking the Australian Open, which begins Monday.

The Aussies are placing their hopes squarely in the hands of Hewitt, who sparked a bit of nervous speculation after he lost his Hopman Cup match against American James Blake last week.

"I think the competitive juices will get flowing as soon as I get out (to Melbourne Park)," Hewitt said afterward. "You get the smell of a Grand Slam."

"We have established an American presence, send in the mobile Starbucks."

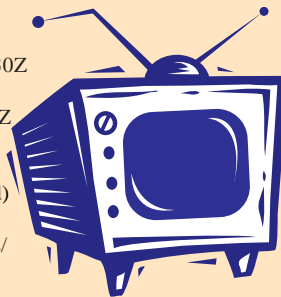


Laugh Support

Sports on local Armed Forces Network TV

Saturday's schedule (AFN Sports)

- ❖ ESPNNews (live) 0030L/2000Z
- ❖ Wal-Mart's Great Outdoors (tape delayed) 0100L/2030Z
- ❖ SportsCenter at The Mercedes Champs (live) 0200L/2130Z
- ❖ SportsCenter (live) 0330L/2300Z
- ❖ Mercedes Championships: 2nd Round (live) 0430L/2400Z
- ❖ Friday Night Fights (live) 0800L/0330Z
- ❖ NFL 2Night (live) 1100L/0630Z
- ❖ NHL: Phoenix Coyotes @ Minnesota Wild (tape delayed) 1230L/0800Z
- ❖ Boston Celtics at Dallas Mavericks (tape delayed) 1630L/1200Z
- ❖ 2003 THQ World Supercross GP (live) 2130L/1700Z



Sunday's schedule (AFN Sports)

- ❖ Cincinnati at TCU (COL BB) (live) 0230L/1000Z
- ❖ Mercedes Championships: 3rd Round (live) 0430L/2400Z
- ❖ Winter X Games (live) 1030L/0600Z
- ❖ FIA SportsCar Championship (tape delayed) 1031L/0601Z
- ❖ Detroit Red Wings at Philadelphia Flyers (tape delayed) 1130L/0700Z
- ❖ SEC: Georgia at Florida (tape delayed) 1630L/1200Z
- ❖ College Hoops Tonight (tape delayed) 1830L/1400Z
- ❖ NBA 2Night (tape delayed) 1900L/1430Z
- ❖ SportsCenter (live) 2000L/1530Z
- ❖ Sunday NFL Countdown (live) 2030L/1600Z
- ❖ Women's COL BB: Wisconsin at Illinois (live) 2330L/1900Z